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May 2015

Celebrating 45 Years of Commencement in Bristol

MAY 15, 2015 12:12 PM

by Heidi Benedict, University Archivist



Every year the University Archives creates a commencement exhibit. This year the theme is *Celebrating 45 Years in Bristol*. The Bristol campus welcomed its first students in September 1969 and awarded its first four-year baccalaureate degrees on June 4, 1970. The exhibit, in the Main Library, includes photographs of students, speakers, honorary degree recipients, and guests from every Bristol commencement. For some of the earlier years, we have a very limited number of photographs.

The Archives holds programs and photographs from as far back as 1948, although the school was not known then as Roger Williams University. At that time, it was the YMCA Institute, a state accredited Junior College, offering associate degrees in accounting, engineering, and management.

If you have commencement pictures or related memorabilia, please consider donating to the Archives.





1989



1996



1999



2004



2011

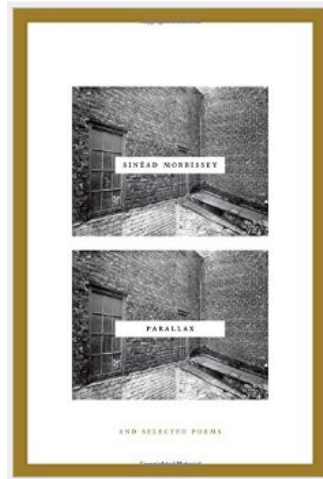


2013

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Book Review: *Parallax: And Selected Poems* by Sinéad Morrissey

MAY 14, 2015 9:53 AM

By Alexandria Wojtanowski '15, *Connections Intern**Parallax: And Selected Poems* by Sinéad Morrissey

Farrar, Straus and Giroux

May 2015

After having been shortlisted for the T.S. Eliot Prize on three different occasions, Belfast's first Poet Laureate, Sinéad Morrissey, finally received the 2013 award for her fifth collection of poems, *Parallax*. But this should not have been a surprise to UK readers. Prior to the 2013 T.S. Eliot Prize, Morrissey had received the Patrick Kavanagh Poetry Award in 1990; the Michael Hartnett Poetry Prize in 2005; a Lannan Literary Fellowship in 2007; first prize in a U.K. National Poetry Competition in 2007; and the Irish Times/Poetry Now Award in 2010.

With *Parallax: And Selected Poems*, American audiences now get a proper introduction to the poetry of Sinéad Morrissey. *Parallax: And Selected Poems* includes works from Morrissey's *Between Here and There* (2000), *The State of the Prisons* (2005), and *Through the Square Window* (2009) that allow a reader unfamiliar with Morrissey's writing to trace the progression of her poetic exploration (the uncomfortable state of being present), concluding with the complete *Parallax* (2013), the prize winning collection that refuses the safety of obscurity.

It is in these present moments that Morrissey handles spatial perception and examines the way space is necessary in order for one to perceive—something introduced in the title *Between Here and There*. Morrissey re-shapes reality—into corners and dents; it's weaved and spooled—to always point to something seemingly paradox: we see better with our eyes closed.

Morrissey maneuvers *The State of the Prisons* with risk—through sound, line, and syntax,—and, with great confidence. Her lines written with definiteness, are lines the reader must stew over: "Like trying to survive / without our oppressive / inside us / when opposites equal life" ("The Emperor's Classic"). She demonstrates her commitment to the needs of the poem—clear throughout "China," which is at first startlingly noisy and comprised of short punchy lines and sentence fragments. Morrissey exercises the versatility of line and syntax as the nine sections of "China" reveal their shape.

Morrissey is commanding in her quiet restlessness. It is immediately established in the first poem in *Through the Square Window* through high-tension line breaks and diction: "the dead / so bored by now of being // dead they flock to gawk— / sanctuary was still sanctuary / except more so, with the inside / holding flickeringly, and the / outside clamouring in" ("Storm"). These lines assign the reader as an uneasy witness.

In *Parallax* Morrissey's unsayability reaches a new magnitude, especially as honesty is expressed through silence: "listening, listening hard, / to—at most—rhythmical breathing / but more often than not to nothing, the air / of the landing thick with something missed" ("Baltimore"). Through playing with the space of silence—tender in approach—Morrissey also plays with the space on every page—a liberating style that continuously engages the reader. At the completion of *Parallax*, the reader cannot simply exit the collection; Morrissey's unsayability lingers, as does the reader's newly-discovered uneasy curiosity.

After reading *Parallax: And Selected Poems*, readers will feel inspired—not just to produce art, but to travel and to re-examine the way they experience the world. The book is a celebration of the physical world and of human spirit, just as much as it is an absolute celebration of poetry.

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